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SIPDIS

SECSTATE FOR IIP/G/IR-BCONATY, NEA/PPD-JDAVIES; ABU DHABI  
FOR IRO-HMENDELSON; VIENNA FOR RPO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KIRC](#) [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#)

SUBJECT: American Corners In The Middle East

Ref: (A) State 198601 (B) State 224009 (C) State 273900

1. Post requests 4 (four) American Corners collections and supporting equipment to be hosted at the institutions listed individually below. Post estimates the cost of each Corner at approximately USD 102,000 based on module costs provided by IRO and current procurement costs of equipment and supplies.

2. CAO Donna Winton will be post POC for this project.

3. Justification: Post has been and remains actively involved in strengthening existing American Studies programs in Jordan and providing support to universities wishing to expand or begin programs in American Studies. We see these programs as a logical nexus for programming about US society, culture and policy to the larger student body and to the public. The materials provided in American Corners collections will enable direct engagement of professors and students with American literature and culture; the interactive capabilities of the Corners will solve a long-standing problem: how to more proactively engage university students and faculty in direct dialogue with American students and professionals, when they have no on-campus facilities to permit that. We also see the interactive capability of American Corners as the potential node for expansion of 'distance learning' classes in American Studies programs, such as the long distance courses taught by Prof. Chris Wise for UJ grad students this past summer.

4. The four requested American Corners are for the following institutions:

--University of Jordan - American Studies Program. University President and Faculty Dean have agreed to host an American Corner to be located next to the Faculty Library. University of Jordan provides the first American Studies graduate degree in the Middle East. The program is in its fourth year and is strongly supported by post through placement of Fulbright professors, visiting speakers, DVC programs, and small grants. The American Corner will give the graduate degree program a much-needed focal point and will encourage investigation by new students who might be considering the program. We also expect distance courses to be taught by preference from the Corner.

-- Hashemite (or Hashemiyya) University - This public university, located in Zarqa, a traditionally conservative suburb neighboring Amman, has requested post's help in starting an American Studies program and specifically requested the kind of support provided in the American Corner. The nascent program is under the direction of recent Voluntary Visitor Dr. Marwan Obeidat, who has a US degree in the field. Dr. Obeidat and Hashemiyya are very eager to develop a viable and multi-dimensional American Studies program and to encourage direct ties with US counterparts they met during the VOLVIS program.

-- Philadelphia University - This private university, located an hour north of Amman, is under the direction of Dr. Adnan Badran, current chair of the Binational Fulbright Board and a very active and receptive contact of the embassy. Dr. Badran, in meetings with Embassy officers and visiting officials such as ECA's Barry Ballow, has indicated his intention of expanding the university's arts and literature offerings to encompass more English language teaching and more emphasis on American arts, literature and society. The university has made space available in their main campus library to house the American Corner. As Philadelphia's IT department recently won the national prize among Jordan's twenty universities, we have no doubt that appropriate technical support for the interactive portion of the Corner will be readily available.

-- American Language Center - With security issues making on-premises outreach to the general population chronically difficult, post is seeking to more actively involve students at the ALC in more traditional public affairs programs. By housing an American Corner at the ALC, we will be able to more actively engage the language students, offer a new

dimension to ALC's English teaching, and make greater use of ALC facilities as a venue for programs open to students and to a greater audience.

15. Post will arrange for formal MOU's with each of the partners above, once approval of the American Corners request has been obtained. In conversations with the responsible parties at each location, we have found great enthusiasm and ready agreement on the salient points of American Corners usage as outlined in reftels.

16. Post anticipates the following budget breakdown:

-- For ALC, one full set of all modules advertised on RPO Vienna's American Corners catalog page, plus one full set of items in IRO Stephen Mallinger's "Islam in America" list, total for all of these currently USD 46,000.  
-- For the universities, three full sets as above, minus the Government Information module and the Young Adults module, cost USD 44,000 each.

-- For all, additional print resources, VHS and CD/DVD and reference resources - to be chosen by posts and recipients jointly, cost approximately USD 12-15,000 each.

-- For all, electronic and interactive equipment (Polycom DVC setup or equivalent, multi-system TVs, VCRs, CD and DVD players, computers, printers and scanners, plus installation of ISDN lines for DVC setup), costed out at post for approximately USD 28,000 each.

-- For all, shipping based on 20 percent of value, approximately USD 17,000.

Total for each Corner, approximately USD 102,000.

Total request for four Corners, approximately USD 408,000.

17. American Corners workshop. CAO Donna Winton requests attendance at the Vienna RPO workshop to be held December 8-10. Post understands that the NEA workshop is likely to be held in Amman. Post hopes to have 2-4 local FSN staff in attendance at the NEA regional workshop.

18. Looking forward to your reply.